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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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KEUSEY, TUTUNJIAN & BITETTO, P.C. 20 CROSSWAYS PARK NORTH SUITE 210 WOOBURY, NY 11797			EXAMINER LINDSEY, RODNEY M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3765	

DATE MAILED: 01/20/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

TJL

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/812,693	SUTTER ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Rodney M. Lindsey	3765	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 December 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 07 December 2005 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Allowable Subject Matter

1. The indicated allowability of claims 21-27 is withdrawn in view of the newly discovered reference(s) to Webb, Lundbeck, Grancsay et al. and Workman et al. Rejections based on the newly cited reference(s) follow.

Drawings

2. The drawings were received on December 7, 2005. These drawings are disapproved. The location of the fasteners 322 are in error per Figure 6. Proposed Figure 3 would be approved.

3. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) because they fail to show the hook and loop fastener as set forth in claim 28 as described in the specification. Any structural detail that is essential for a proper understanding of the disclosed invention should be shown in the drawing. MPEP § 608.02(d). Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet"

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or “New Sheet” pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

5. Claims 6, 25, 26 and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 6 is confusing in that the limitation of “another attachment point” appears to be in addition to the “points” set forth on line 7 of claim 1. Claim 25 is confusing as “a connection point” on line 3 it appears should be --a third connection point-- and claim 26 is confusing as “a second” on line 4 it appears should be --the second--. In claim 34 “the plurality of screw less connectors” has no antecedent basis.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 1, 2, 4, 13, 31 and 33-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot and Lundbeck. With respect to claim 1 Webb shows a shell 11, a suspension band 12 and a crown pad 30 connected to the suspension

band 12 at points 22 separate from the suspension band's attachment 13 to the shell 11. Webb does not teach the shell being formed of para-aramid to provide ballistic protection and an adjustable headband connected to the suspension band at points remote from the suspension band attachment to the shell and separate from the crown pad's connection to the suspension band. Medwell teaches (see column 3, line 7) that the use of para-aramid to provide ballistic protection is old and well known to those of ordinary skill in the art of military helmets. Groot teaches an adjustable headband 19 connected to a suspension band 15 about locations remote from the suspension band 15 and crown pad 25 connection at 26 to the shell. Lundbeck teaches to define a connection point 18, 22 between loop connected members 16, 20, 24. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the shell of Webb of the para-aramid of Medwell to achieve the advantage of effecting a ballistic protection characteristic to the shell. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide the helmet assembly of Webb with the headband 19 of Groot to adapt the helmet to a variety of specific head sizes. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention provide connection points between the headband and suspension band to stabilize the connection therebetween. With respect to claim 2 note such further teaching of Medwell (see column 3, lines 9-12) in effecting the ballistic protection characteristic to the shell. With respect to claim 4 note the loops at 29, 30 taught by Groot directly securing the headband to the suspension band and note the loops and straps 25, 27 of Webb securing the crown pad to the suspension band. Molitoris does not teach the use of loops to secure the crown pad to the suspension band. With respect to claim 13 note the nape pad 34 of Webb. With respect to claim 31 note such an arrangement of the crown pad as shown

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in Figure 1 of Webb. With respect to claim 33 note such an arrangement of the suspension band as shown in Figure 2 of Webb. With respect to claims 34-36 note that the portions of the headband as taught by Groot that would lie between connectors 13, 22 as shown in Figure 2 of Webb would be conformable, adjustable or adaptable as claimed.

8. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot and Lundbeck as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Lammers et al. Webb does not teach painting the shell. Lammers et al. teach that painting a shell is old and well known (see column 2, line 41). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide the shell of Webb with the paint of Lammers et al. to achieve the advantage of effecting a desired appearance to the shell.

9. Claims 5-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot, Lundbeck and Dauster as applied to claim 4 above, and further in view of Kallis and Durand et al. With respect to claim 5 the modified helmet assembly of Webb does not teach the loops for the headband and suspension band being formed of nylon and including hook and loop fasteners. Kallis teaches old the use of a headband including loops having hook and loop fasteners. Durand et al. teaches old the use of nylon in suspension systems. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to substitute the hook and loop fasteners of the headband of Kallis for the loop snaps of the modified helmet assembly of Webb to achieve a like result of having the headband be detachable. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to employ nylon in the suspension system of Webb as claimed for the advantage of the strength offered by nylon. With

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respect to claim 6 note the attachment points as taught at 18, 22 by Lundbeck. With respect to claim 7 note the looped straps 29, 30 of Groot.

10. Claims 8 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot and Lundbeck as applied to claim 4 above, and further in view of Durand et al. Webb does not teach the loops and straps for the crown pad and suspension band being formed of nylon. Durand et al. teaches old the use of nylon in suspension systems. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to employ nylon in the suspension system of Webb as claimed for the advantage of the strength offered by nylon.

11. Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot and Lundbeck as applied to claim 4 above, and further in view of Dauster. Dauster teaches that it is old in the art to use first rear loops at 6 and second rear loops at 12 to connect a crown pad of a headgear. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to substitute the loops at 6, 12 of Dauster for those at 27 of Webb to achieve a like result of securing the crown pad to the suspension band.

12. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot, Lundbeck and Dauster as applied to claim 9 above, and further in view of Durand et al. Webb does not teach the first and second rear loops for the crown pad being formed of nylon. Durand et al. teaches old the use of nylon in suspension systems. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to employ nylon in the suspension system of Webb as claimed for the advantage of the strength offered by nylon.

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13. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot and Lundbeck as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Aileo et al. '569. Webb teaches the use of fasteners 13, 22 but does not teach that the fasteners are made of metal. Aileo et al. '569 teach that the use of metal fasteners is old and well known (see column 1, lines 15-20). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the fasteners of Webb with the metal of Aileo et al. '569 to achieve the expedience of employing well known fastener material.

14. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot, Lundbeck and Aileo et al. '569 as applied to claim 11 above, and further in view of Aileo. Webb does not teach the fasteners comprising a screw and a clip. Aileo in Figure 9 at 47 teaches old the use of fasteners in the form of a screw and clip. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to substitute the screw and clip of Aileo for the fasteners of Webb to achieve a like result of attaching the suspension band to the shell.

15. Claims 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot and Lundbeck as applied to claim 13 above, and further in view of Aileo et al. '569 and Grancsay et al. '176. With respect to claim 14 Webb teaches fasteners 13, 22 but does not teach the fasteners being of metal and for attaching the nape pad to the shell. Aileo et al. '569 teach that the use of metal fasteners is old and well known (see column 1, lines 15-20). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the fasteners of Webb with the metal of Aileo et al. '569 to achieve the expedience of employing well known fastener material. Grancsay et al. '176 teach that it is old to attach a

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suspension band 12 and a nape pad 16 to a shell 10 by fasteners 19. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to further modify the helmet assembly of Webb such that the fasteners attaching the suspension band to the shell also attach the nape pad to the shell in the manner of Grancsay et al. '176 to achieve an alternative nape pad attachment. With respect to claims 15, the fasteners of Webb are inherently capable of functioning to permit adjustment as claimed as they would accommodate the adjusting nape pad.

16. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot and Lundbeck as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Grancsay et al. '176. Webb does not teach a chin strap subassembly. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide the helmet assembly of Webb with the chin strap subassembly at 13 of Grancsay et al. '176 to firmly seat the shell on a user's head.

17. Claims 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot, Lundbeck and Grancsay et al. '176 as applied to claim 16 above, and further in view of Aileo et al. '569. With respect to claim 17 Webb teaches fasteners 13, 22 but does not teach the fasteners being of metal and for attaching the chin strap to the shell. Aileo et al. '569 teach that the use of metal fasteners is old and well known (see column 1, lines 15-20). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the fasteners of Webb with the metal of Aileo et al. '569 to achieve the expedience of employing well known fastener material. Grancsay et al. '176 teach that it is old to attach a suspension band 12 and a chin strap assembly as at 13 to a shell 10 by fasteners 19. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to further modify the helmet assembly of Webb such that the fasteners attaching the suspension band to the shell also attach

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the chin strap assembly to the shell as taught Grancsay et al. '176. With respect to claim 18 the fasteners of Webb are inherently capable of functioning to permit adjustment as claimed as they would accommodate the adjusting chin strap assembly.

18. Claims 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot and Lundbeck as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Aileo et al. '569 and Grancsay et al. '176. With respect to claim 19 Webb teaches fasteners 13, 22 but does not teach the fasteners being of metal and for attaching the nape pad and a chin strap assembly to the shell. Aileo et al. '569 teach that the use of metal fasteners is old and well known (see column 1, lines 15-20). Grancsay et al. '176 teach that it is old to attach a suspension band 12 and a nape pad 16 and chin strap assembly as at 13 to a shell 10 by fasteners 19. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the fasteners of Webb with the metal of Aileo et al. '569 to achieve the expedience of employing well known fastener material. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to further modify the helmet assembly of Webb such that the fasteners attaching the suspension band to the shell also attach the nape pad and a chin strap assembly to the shell as taught Grancsay et al. '176 to achieve an alternative nape pad attachment and to firmly seat the shell on a user's head. With respect to claim 20 the fasteners of Webb are inherently capable of functioning to permit adjustment as claimed as they would accommodate the adjusting chin strap assembly and the adjusting nape pad.

19. Claims 28 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot and Lundbeck as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Mirabella. With respect to claim 28 Webb does not teach the headband being of nylon and with

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hook and loop fasteners for adjusting its circumference. Mirabella teaches at 30, 32 the use of nylon and hook and loop fasteners. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the headband of Webb of the nylon and hook and loop fasteners of Mirabella to achieve the advantage of strength afforded by the nylon and of circumferential adjustability afforded by the hook and loop fasteners. With respect to claim 29 the modified helmet assembly of Webb does not teach the use of leather on the headband.

Mirabella at 115 teaches the use of leather. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide the headband of the modified helmet assembly of Webb with the leather of Mirabella to achieve the advantage of accommodating a user's sweat.

20. Claim 32 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webb in view of Medwell, Groot and Lundbeck as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Aileo et al. '569 and Mirabella. Webb does not teach the use of leather and a nylon mesh in forming the crown pad. Aileo et al. '569 teach old the use of leather and mesh to engage the crown of a user. Mirabella teaches old the use of nylon in a suspension system. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the crown pad of Webb of the leather and mesh of Aileo et al. '569 to achieve the advantage of lightweight and comfort. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to additionally form the crown pad of the nylon of Mirabella for the strength afforded by nylon.

21. Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Molitoris, Medwell, Grancsay et al. '176 and Aileo et al. Molitoris shows a shell 10, a suspension band 20, an adjustable headband 24, a crown pad 36 and connectors 27, 30 securing the headband and crown pad to the suspension band without screws. Molitoris does not teach the shell being

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formed of para-aramid to provide ballistic protection, metal fasteners and a nape pad and chinstrap subassembly coupled to the shell with the metal fasteners. Medwell teaches (see column 3, line 7) that the use of para-aramid to provide ballistic protection is old and well known to those of ordinary skill in the art of military helmets. Aileo et al. teach that the use of metal fasteners is old and well known (see column 1, lines 15-20). Grancsay et al. '176 teach that it is old to attach a suspension band 12 and a nape pad and chin strap subassembly as at 13, 16 to a shell 10 by fasteners 19. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the shell of Molitoris of the para-aramid of Medwell to achieve the advantage of effecting a ballistic protection characteristic to the shell. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the fasteners of Molitoris with the metal of Aileo et al. to achieve the expedience of employing well known fastener material. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to further modify the helmet assembly of Molitoris such that the fasteners attaching the suspension band to the shell also attach a nape pad and chin strap subassembly to the shell as taught Grancsay et al. '176 to achieve an alternative nape pad attachment and to firmly seat the shell on a user's head.

22. Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Molitoris, Medwell, Grancsay et al. '176, Aileo et al. and Dye et al. Molitoris shows a shell 10, a suspension band 20, an adjustable headband 24, a crown pad 36 and connectors 27, 30 securing the headband and crown pad to the suspension band without screws. Molitoris does not teach the shell being formed of para-aramid to provide ballistic protection, metal fasteners and a nape pad and chinstrap subassembly coupled to the shell with the metal fasteners. Medwell teaches (see

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column 3, line 7) that the use of para-aramid to provide ballistic protection is old and well known to those of ordinary skill in the art of military helmets. Aileo et al. teach that the use of metal fasteners is old and well known (see column 1, lines 15-20). Grancsay et al. '176 teach that it is old to attach a suspension band 12 and a nape pad and chin strap subassembly as at 13, 16 to a shell 10 by fasteners 19. Dye et al. teach the use of a coupling between nape and chin strap assemblies. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the shell of Molitoris of the para-aramid of Medwell to achieve the advantage of effecting a ballistic protection characteristic to the shell. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the fasteners of Molitoris with the metal of Aileo et al. to achieve the expedience of employing well known fastener material. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to further modify the helmet assembly of Molitoris such that the fasteners attaching the suspension band to the shell also attach a nape pad and chin strap subassembly to the shell as taught Grancsay et al. '176 to achieve an alternative nape pad attachment and to firmly seat the shell on a user's head. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to further modify the helmet assembly of Molitoris by providing a coupling between the nape pad and chin strap assemblies in the manner of 51 of Dye et al. to effect simultaneous operation of the nape pad and chin strap assemblies.

23. Claims 23 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Molitoris, Medwell, Grancsay et al. '176, Aileo et al. and Dye et al. as applied to claim 22 above, and further in view of Mirabella. With respect to claim 23 the modified helmet assembly of Molitoris does not teach the use of leather on the nape pad portion. Mirabella at 115 teaches the

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use of leather. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide the nape pad portion of the modified helmet assembly of Molitoris with the leather of Mirabella to achieve the advantage of accommodating a user's sweat. With respect to claim 24 Molitoris does not teach the chin strap being of nylon and of first and second straps as claimed. Mirabella teaches at 30, 32 the use of nylon. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the chinstrap of Molitoris of the nylon of Mirabella to achieve the advantage of strength afforded by the nylon. It further would have been obvious to form the chinstrap of the modified helmet assembly of Molitoris of the straps at 48 of Dye et al. to provide engagement under and in front of the chin.

24. Claims 25 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Molitoris, Medwell, Grancsay et al. '176, Aileo et al. and Dye et al. as applied to claim 22 above, and further in view of Workman et al. With respect to claim 25 Molitoris does not teach the use of a set of strap joiners. Workman et al. teach the use of a set of strap joiners 48 as shown in Figure 11c thus defining three sets of straps. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide the helmet assembly of Molitoris with the strap joiners 48 of Workman et al. as an alternative means of interconnecting the nape pad portion and chinstrap portion. With respect to claim 27 note the quick release latch as taught by Dye et al. as at 49.

25. Claim 26 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Molitoris, Medwell, Grancsay et al. '176, Aileo et al., Dye et al. and Workman et al. as applied to claim 25 above, and further in view of Mirabella. Molitoris does not teach the nape and chin strap assembly being of nylon. Mirabella teaches at 30, 32 the use of nylon. It would have been

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obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the nape and chinstrap portions of the modified helmet assembly of Molitoris of the nylon of Mirabella to achieve the advantage of strength afforded by the nylon.

Conclusion

26. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Note particularly, the similar supports of the helmets of Grancsay '306, Austin et al., Lee et al., Alesi, Simpson et al., Riddell and Mickel and the strap joiners of Chiarella and Broersma.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rodney M. Lindsey whose telephone number is (571) 272-4989. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:30-5:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John J. Calvert can be reached on (571) 272-4983. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RML' followed by a large, stylized loop.

Rodney M. Lindsey
Primary Examiner
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rml